

Research on Strategies for Cultivating English Reading Ability among Non-English Major College Students

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Abstract: *The main purpose of this article is to delve into and explore methods and strategies for improving English reading skills among non-English major university students. Through detailed analysis and evaluation, our aim is to identify the major problems and challenges that non-English major students face in the realm of English reading. Based on these findings, this article will propose a series of practical teaching strategies and learning methods designed to help students overcome these obstacles, thereby effectively enhancing their English reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, this article will also explore how to stimulate and increase students' interest in English reading, as interest is an indispensable driving force in the learning process. By comprehensively applying these strategies and methods, we hope to assist students in making significant progress in English reading and ultimately achieve the goal of improving their overall English proficiency.*

Keywords: *Non-English major; English reading ability; cultivation strategies; learning methods*

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

For non-English majors, cultivating good reading skills is a crucial aspect throughout their English learning process. However, we have found that many students face a series of challenges and problems when engaging in English reading. These challenges include, but are not limited to, insufficient vocabulary, slow reading speed, and a lack of sufficient interest in the reading material. The presence of these issues not only affects students' progress in English learning but also negatively impacts their future academic research and career development. In light of this, it is particularly critical and urgent to conduct in-depth research and discussions on strategies for developing English reading skills among non-English major college students.

1.2 The purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to delve into and explore methods and strategies for improving the English reading ability of non-English major college students. Through detailed analysis and evaluation, the aim is to identify the major problems and challenges that students currently face in the field of English reading, and based on these findings, to propose a series of practical teaching strategies and learning methods. These strategies and methods are intended to help students overcome reading obstacles, improve their English reading comprehension skills, and stimulate and enhance their interest in English reading.

1.3 Research Significance

English reading ability is crucial for students who are not majoring in English. It is not only related to academic achievements but also affects career development and the cultivation of personal interests. Through the strategies and methods proposed in this study, students can make significant progress in English reading, thereby enhancing their overall English proficiency. In addition, this study can provide teaching references for English teachers, helping them to guide students in improving their reading skills more effectively. The importance of English reading cannot be overstated, as it serves as a gateway to understanding the world and accessing a wealth of information. It is a skill that transcends

the boundaries of the classroom and has a profound impact on one's ability to communicate and interact with others in a globalized world. Therefore, developing strong English reading skills is essential for students who aspire to excel in their studies, advance in their chosen careers, and enrich their cultural and intellectual lives. The findings of this study aim to equip students with the necessary tools and techniques to navigate the complexities of English texts, enabling them to comprehend and analyze with greater ease and confidence. Furthermore, by offering practical insights into effective teaching methodologies, this research seeks to empower educators to tailor their instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students, fostering a more engaging and successful learning environment.

1.4 Research Methodology

This study will employ an empirical research method, designing a small-scale empirical study to verify whether the proposed strategies are effective. The research will assess the practical effects of teaching strategies and learning methods by comparing the differences in reading ability between the experimental group and the control group. In addition, the study will also adopt a literature review approach, referencing research findings in related fields to ensure the comprehensiveness and depth of the study.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of English Reading Ability among Non-English Major College Students

The main problems that non-English majors generally encounter in English reading mainly focus on the following aspects:

First, insufficient vocabulary. Vocabulary is the foundation of English reading. Many students majoring in non-English fields have a noticeable lack of vocabulary accumulation, which leads to frequent encounters with unfamiliar words during the reading process, affecting their overall understanding of the content. Insufficient vocabulary not only limits their in-depth understanding of the articles but also reduces the fluency and efficiency of reading^[1].

Second, slow reading speed. Due to the limitations of vocabulary and the lack of effective reading techniques, non-English major students often read English materials slowly. They may need to spend more time understanding and translating each word or sentence, which not only affects reading efficiency but also can easily make them feel tired and lose interest. It can easily make them feel tired and lose interest. Lack of reading interest: Due to limitations in vocabulary and reading speed, many students find it difficult to face English reading materials, gradually losing interest in reading. In addition, if the reading material is monotonous, boring, or disconnected from the students' interests and practical needs, it will further weaken their motivation to read.

Third, lack of reading skills. In addition to vocabulary and speed issues, many students lack effective reading skills, such as quickly identifying the main idea of an article, understanding complex sentence structures, and inferring word meanings. The lack of these skills makes them feel at a loss when faced with complex or long English texts.

Fourth, insufficient cultural background knowledge. English reading is not just about understanding language and text; it also involves understanding the cultural background of English-speaking countries. Many non-English major students lack knowledge of the culture, history, and social background of English-speaking countries, which makes it difficult for them to fully understand the deeper meanings of articles.

Besides, psychological factors. Some students experience anxiety and lack of confidence when reading English. Due to concerns about not understanding or misinterpreting, they tend to feel nervous while reading, which further affects their reading efficiency and comprehension ability.

In summary, the problems that non-English majors face in English reading comprehension involve various aspects such as vocabulary, reading speed, interest, techniques, cultural background knowledge, and psychological factors. To effectively address these issues, students need to continuously accumulate vocabulary, master reading techniques, cultivate interest in reading, and gradually enhance their cultural background knowledge and confidence in the process of daily learning^[2].

3. The importance of English reading skills

In today's globalized world, English reading skills are crucial for students who are not majoring in English, whether for academic, professional development, or personal interests. Firstly, from an academic perspective, English is the primary language for international academic exchanges. Many important academic papers, journals, and books are published in English. With good English reading skills, students can access the latest academic resources and research findings more broadly, thus gaining an advantage in learning and research. Additionally, many international conferences and seminars use English as the language of communication, and students who can read and understand English materials will find it easier to participate in these academic activities and broaden their academic horizons.

In terms of professional development, English reading skills also play an indispensable role. With the development of economic globalization, an increasing number of businesses and institutions require talents with an international perspective and cross-cultural communication skills. English reading skills enable students to read and understand the dynamics of international markets, industry trends, and technological advancements, thereby making wiser decisions at work. Moreover, many multinational companies and international organizations often consider English reading skills as one of the basic requirements when hiring, so students with this skill will be more competitive in job seeking.

For personal interests, English reading skills open up a colorful world for students. By reading English novels, newspapers, magazines, and online resources, students can learn about the cultures, histories, and social phenomena of different countries and regions, enriching their life experiences. Furthermore, English reading skills can also help students enjoy more fun in entertainment and leisure activities, such as watching English movies and TV shows without the limitation of subtitles, gaining a deeper understanding of the plot and characters.

In conclusion, English reading skills are important for students who are not majoring in English in many ways. They not only contribute to academic research and professional development but also enrich personal life and hobbies. Therefore, no matter what their major background is, students should value and strive to improve their English reading skills^[3].

4. Strategies for Developing English Reading Skills

Improving the reading comprehension skills of non-English majors is a crucial aspect of the English language teaching field. To achieve this goal, teachers and students can adopt a series of effective teaching strategies and learning methods.

Firstly, teachers should encourage students to read extensively, engaging with a variety of English materials, including novels, newspapers, magazines, and academic articles. By encountering different styles and genres of texts, students can gradually adapt to various reading contexts and enhance their understanding of different literary forms.

Secondly, teachers can guide students in learning and applying effective reading techniques, such as skimming and scanning. Skimming helps students quickly grasp the main idea and gist of an article, while scanning allows them to delve into the details and deeper meanings of the text.

Moreover, teachers should also teach students how to use contextual clues to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words, rather than immediately looking them up in a dictionary. This skill is vital for improving reading fluency and comprehension.

For students, regularly conducting self-assessment and reflection is also key to enhancing reading skills. Students should record the difficulties they encounter during reading and seek appropriate strategies to overcome them.

Lastly, utilizing modern technology, such as online reading platforms and e-books, can provide students with a richer and more interactive learning experience. These tools often include features that assist with reading, such as built-in dictionaries, translation tools, and text-to-speech functionalities, which can help students better understand the reading material.

4.1 Teaching Strategies

By employing a rich variety of reading materials, we can effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm

and interest in reading. These materials can include various types of books, magazines, newspapers, and online articles, which not only provide students with a broad knowledge base but also help them to encounter different writing styles and modes of expression.

Introducing task-based teaching methods, by having students complete various specific tasks, can effectively improve their reading comprehension skills. These tasks can include answering questions, summarizing the main idea of a paragraph, participating in group discussions, or writing reflections on what they have read, etc. Through these activities, students can gain a deeper understanding of the text content and apply their knowledge to real-life situations.

Utilizing information technology to assist in teaching, such as using e-books, online reading platforms, etc., can provide students with more convenient and diverse reading resources. The application of information technology not only saves time in searching for and carrying paper books but also enhances the reading experience through multimedia, such as incorporating audio and video elements, making the reading process more lively and interesting.

Organizing extracurricular reading activities, such as book clubs, English corners, etc., can further broaden students' reading horizons and enhance their practical reading abilities. Through these activities, students can not only share their own reading experiences but also gain new reading inspirations from others. At the same time, these activities can help students improve their oral expression skills and social skills^[4].

4.2 Learning Methods

To cultivate good reading habits, it is recommended to regularly schedule specific time slots dedicated to reading. This can help us better immerse ourselves in the reading atmosphere and develop a habit of continuous reading. At the same time, by widely reading different types of books and articles, we can be exposed to a variety of knowledge and ideas, thereby broadening our horizons and enriching our knowledge reserves.

In terms of reading skills, it is crucial to teach some effective reading methods. For example, skimming techniques can help us quickly browse through articles and grasp the main idea and structure; scanning techniques allow us to quickly identify and capture key information in the article, improving reading efficiency; and by predicting what comes next, we can actively think while reading, which not only enhances our reading comprehension but also stimulates our interest in the reading material.

Vocabulary learning is the foundation for improving reading ability. Through various methods and practices, such as making vocabulary cards, participating in vocabulary games, and practicing synonyms and antonyms, we can effectively increase students' vocabulary. At the same time, by using newly learned vocabulary in sentences, or trying to apply these words in writing and speaking, students can enhance their ability to use vocabulary in real contexts, allowing them to express their thoughts more freely.

Encouraging students to engage in critical reading is an important way to develop their ability to analyze and evaluate information. By guiding students to ask questions while reading, seek answers, compare different viewpoints, and deeply understand the meaning of the material, and propose their own insights and critiques, this not only improves their reading comprehension but also fosters their independent thinking and innovative thinking.

With the comprehensive application of these well-designed teaching strategies and diversified learning methods, non-English major college students will make significant progress in English reading. These strategies and methods not only enhance their reading comprehension skills but also help them better master linguistic knowledge, making them more adept at reading. Moreover, through these effective teaching approaches, students' interest and motivation in learning English will be strengthened, as they can experience a sense of achievement and progress in the learning process, which will motivate them to engage more actively in English studies. Ultimately, students will not only improve their reading skills but also achieve a comprehensive enhancement in their overall English proficiency, laying a solid foundation for their future academic research or career paths^[5].

5. Empirical research

To verify the effectiveness of strategies for developing English reading skills among non-English major college students, this study carefully designed a small-scale empirical research project. The

subjects of the study were 100 students from our university who are not majoring in English. These students were randomly assigned to two different groups, namely the experimental group and the control group, with each group consisting of 50 students. Students in the experimental group will receive a new strategy for developing English reading skills, while students in the control group will continue to follow traditional teaching methods. The entire study period is set for one semester, specifically 16 weeks. The strategies adopted in the experimental group include the following points:

Firstly, the diversification of reading materials is a key aspect of the program. teachers will provide students with a wide array of reading materials, which may encompass a diverse range of genres and formats. This could include engaging novels that capture the imagination, current newspapers that keep students informed about the world around them, and academic articles that challenge and stimulate critical thinking. The goal behind this approach is to increase students' interest in reading by exposing them to a variety of texts, thereby enriching their background knowledge and broadening their intellectual horizons.

Secondly, the organization of interactive reading activities is designed to foster a dynamic learning environment. By facilitating group discussions, role-playing exercises, and thought-provoking debates, students are encouraged to actively participate in the reading process. These activities are not only meant to engage students but also to provide them with opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired through reading to real-life communication scenarios. This helps in reinforcing their understanding and retention of the material.

Furthermore, the integration of vocabulary and grammar teaching with the reading materials is a strategic approach to language education. Based on the content of the reading materials, teachers will design lessons that focus on specific vocabulary and grammatical structures encountered in the texts. This method helps students to better understand the context in which words and grammatical rules are used, thereby enhancing their language application skills and enabling them to comprehend and produce language more effectively.

In addition, the program emphasizes the training in reading skills, which is essential for students to become proficient readers. Teachers will instruct students in various techniques such as reading quickly for main ideas, reading intensively for detailed comprehension, predicting content based on titles and headings, and summarizing key points. These skills are crucial for improving reading efficiency and the depth of understanding, allowing students to navigate through texts with confidence and accuracy.

Finally, regular reading tests and feedback are integral to the assessment and improvement of students' reading skills. A reading comprehension test is conducted every two weeks to gauge students' progress and to identify areas where they may need further support. Detailed feedback is provided to students after each test, which not only highlights their strengths but also pinpoints specific areas that require additional attention. This feedback loop is designed to help students understand their progress in reading skills and to guide them on the path to continuous improvement.

At the beginning and end of the experiment, all participating students took the same English reading comprehension test to assess changes in their reading abilities during the experimental period. In addition, students in the experimental group completed a questionnaire survey, through which we can understand the students' acceptance of the new strategy and their feelings and feedback. By comparing the test results of the experimental group and the control group before and after the experiment, we can evaluate the effectiveness of the new strategy. If the experimental group's performance is significantly higher than that of the control group, this indicates that the new strategy is effective in improving the English reading skills of non-English major college students. At the same time, by analyzing the results of the questionnaire survey, we can obtain feedback information on the effectiveness of the strategy implementation, which also has important reference value for further improvement and optimization of the strategy.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Research on strategies for developing English reading skills among non-English majors has found that effective improvement in reading ability depends on a variety of factors, including students' personal backgrounds, motivation to learn, the appropriateness of reading materials, and innovative teaching methods. The study indicates that enhancing reading skills requires not only the accumulation of linguistic knowledge but also the cultivation of reading strategies and the development of reading habits.

Firstly, the study found that vocabulary and grammatical knowledge are the foundation of reading comprehension. Students need to master a sufficient vocabulary and basic grammatical structures to read smoothly. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers focus on teaching vocabulary and grammar in their instruction and encourage students to engage in extensive reading outside of class to increase the practical application of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge.

Secondly, the study emphasizes the importance of reading strategies. Effective reading strategies include prediction, skimming, intensive reading, summarizing, and critical thinking. Teachers should teach students how to apply these strategies and provide opportunities for students to practice them in the classroom. For example, by guiding students to make predictions and discussions, their reading interest and comprehension can be improved.

In addition, the study also found that the choice of reading materials has a significant impact on students' reading interest and skill development. It is recommended that teachers choose reading materials that are close to students' lives, align with their interests, and match their cognitive levels. At the same time, students should be encouraged to independently select reading materials to increase their motivation and engagement in reading.

Finally, the study points out that the development of reading habits is crucial for improving reading skills. It is recommended that teachers regularly schedule reading time in class and encourage students to engage in independent reading outside of class. Moreover, modern technological means, such as online reading platforms and e-books, can be used to stimulate students' interest in reading and provide a diverse reading experience.

In summary, the cultivation of English reading skills among non-English majors requires teachers to focus on vocabulary and grammar instruction, emphasize the teaching and practice of reading strategies, select appropriate reading materials, and encourage students to develop good reading habits. Through the comprehensive application of these strategies, students' English reading skills can be effectively enhanced.

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